

January 22, 2021

RE: HFXXX Certifications for Victims of Crimes

Dear Chair Mariana and members of the Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform and Finance Policy Committee:

I, Anthony Baquero, an attorney in Minneapolis, support the proposed bill and respectfully request that members of this committee support efforts to prevent the victimization of Minnesota residents especially in Greater Minnesota. HFXXX promotes a streamlined certification process throughout the state of Minnesota which will provide guidance to law enforcement agencies when receiving such requests. This will be most beneficial to law enforcement agencies with fewer resources. Garnering the assistance of the victim and the public at large is incredibly important for law enforcement to keep its community safe as it creates trust between the police and its residents. Furthermore, HFXXX promotes the protection of crime victims and ensures that foreign national crime victims are available to assist in the prosecution of those accused of the crimes.

Currently, there is no standard certification process throughout Minnesota. Foreign national/immigrant victims of crimes are treated differently depending on the community where the crime occurred. This was not the intention of Congress. Congress created the U visa to address the problem that immigrant women and children are often targeted to be victims of crimes committed against them in the United States, including domestic violence, sexual assault, involuntary servitude, being held hostage or being criminally restrained. However, unless and until this state develops a statewide certification process, the intent of congress to protect all immigrant victims of crimes cannot be fulfilled to the full extent of the law.

Again, I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for the community to feel that it can trust its police force. I have had too many clients not call the police out of fear that they will suffer the unrelated consequence of being put in immigration proceedings. As a result, the crime goes unpunished and often leads to more crime and another victim. A working relationship between the police and its residents shows that the police care more about keeping the community safe as opposed to punishing those here without lawful status is incredibly important to a safe and harmonious population.

Supporting HFXXX will allow communities throughout Greater Minnesota foster positive relationships with law enforcement.

Thank you for your consideration and your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Baquero', written in a cursive style.

Anthony Baquero